



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department  
Office of Housing and Economic Development  
Press Release**

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**PATRICK ADMINISTRATION UNVEILS CONSUMER  
HEALTHCARE TRANSPARENCY CAMPAIGN**

*Consumers now able to find and compare procedure prices online*

BOSTON – Monday, October 14, 2014 - Patrick Administration officials today announced a healthcare transparency campaign aimed at educating consumers about new health insurance cost-estimator tools that allow them to shop around and compare prices of medical procedures.

“Access to affordable care gives peace of mind and economic security to working people and families; increases productivity for large and small employers alike; creates jobs and contributes to the strength of the Massachusetts economy,” said Governor Deval Patrick.

The “Get the Deal on Care” advertising campaign raises awareness of new health insurance cost-estimators, which allow Massachusetts consumers to compare the price of medical procedures before obtaining those services. The online tools are required as part of a transparency provision in the state’s 2012 landmark healthcare cost containment law.

“Price transparency has always been a cornerstone of a healthy marketplace,” said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Greg Bialecki. “The Patrick Administration has been committed to changing the dynamic of how consumers and businesses purchase health care. Now more than ever, we as consumers are in the driver’s seat and can make better value decisions.”

The campaign website, **[GetTheDealOnCare.org](#)**, was developed in partnership with 13 Massachusetts health insurance companies and many Massachusetts’ employers, providers and consumer groups. The website includes information about the law’s requirements, and provides a link to each participating insurer’s online cost-estimator. The Office of Consumer Affairs also produced transit and online advertising to draw awareness to the law and tools, which will

“These tools are an example of how industry, innovation and technology can benefit competition and consumers,” said Undersecretary of Consumer Affairs Barbara Anthony. “Empowering consumers with pricing information is a necessary first step toward a patient-centered culture that will result in the more efficient delivery of lower-cost, higher quality healthcare services. Armed with the missing piece of the puzzle –

price – consumers can continue to consider quality, location, and other factors when selecting healthcare services.”

The law requires that, starting October 1, 2014, health insurers provide an online cost-estimator that shows real-time information tailored to a member’s specific plan, taking into account information such as co-pay, deductible, and co-insurance. This way, a member searching for a common procedure, such as an MRI, or the cost of a visit to a dermatologist will be able to compare prices charged by different providers and make the best decision before the service is obtained.

Cost-estimator tools are available online now from all insurers writing health insurance policies in Massachusetts. Consumers can find their tool by visiting their insurer’s website or at [www.GetTheDealOnCare.org](http://www.GetTheDealOnCare.org)

“By continuing to build partnerships between the public and private sectors, we move closer to achieving our health care reform goals of enhanced access, quality and affordability,” said Health and Human Services Secretary John W. Polanowicz. “These tools will help thousands access more affordable care, better understand the costs associated with their care, and ultimately make better decisions that keep them and their families healthy.”

“We are proud of what we have accomplished so far with 97 percent of our residents insured,” said Secretary for Administration and Finance Glen Shor. “By increasing transparency, consumers will be able to make informed decisions about their healthcare costs while accessing the best care.”

“This innovative project empowers patients to make the best decision about their health and holds the promise of driving down costs and improving the overall health of our populations,” Senate President Therese Murray said. “While this tool is still in the beginning phases, I am confident that its potential is far greater than we realize and I want to urge residents throughout the Commonwealth to use this information to take charge of their health.”

Today, Governor Patrick proclaimed October 14, 2014, to be the Commonwealth’s first Healthcare Consumer Empowerment Day.

The “Get the Deal on Care” campaign is also launching a social media campaign to further engage consumers. Follow the campaign on Facebook and Twitter, @TheDealOnCare, and join the conversation using #empowerHC.

“High health insurance premiums have been the number one concern for small businesses for many years running,” said President of the Retailers Association of Massachusetts Jon Hurst. “We have long argued that increased transparency in costs and pricing was needed so that consumers could actually know what they are buying, and how much it was going to cost. Also, having prices publicly available forces competition – but only if the consumer gets engaged. We need to promote these new

cost estimator tools, and we need to use them, because we are all health care consumers.”

“Healthcare transparency needs to include both cost and quality information because in the absence of quality data, people may assume that more expensive care is better care, and we know that is often not the case,” said Barbra Rabson, President and CEO of Massachusetts Health Quality Partners. “We have a new consumer friendly website in Massachusetts, [Healthcarecompassma.org](http://Healthcarecompassma.org) that shares reliable quality information about Massachusetts primary care doctors. We encourage people to use this information to make better informed choices about their health care.”

“In Massachusetts we are fortunate that most employers provide health insurance to their employees but the high cost is a significant burden for many of them,” said AIM President Rick Lord. “Now, however, employers they can play an important role in addressing the cost challenge by encouraging their employees to become engaged and informed consumers by using the new online tools to find lower-cost, high-quality health care providers.”

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